

Amendments to the Specification:

Please amend the specification as follows:

Please replace paragraph 1, starting at page 7, lines 12-13, with the following rewritten paragraph:

A preferable method for tape stripping consists of first cleaning the surface of the skin with ethanol, for example, to remove any sebaceous lipid and dirt, gently placing a piece of adhesive tape cut to a suitable size (e.g., 5 x 5 cm) onto the surface of the skin, uniformly applying force to the entire piece of tape to press on flat, and then peeling off the adhesive tape with a uniform force. The adhesive tape may be commercially available cellophane tape, and for example, ~~Scotch Superstrength Mailing Tape~~ SCOTCH® SUPER STRENGTH MAILING TAPE (3M) can be used.

Please replace paragraph 2, starting at page 10, line 18, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The present invention also provides a method for maintaining transparency and/or water holding capacity of the stratum corneum by inhibiting oxidation of protein in the stratum corneum. Inhibition of oxidation of stratum corneum protein can be achieved by dissolving a suitable antioxidant, such as a commonly known compound such as ascorbic acid or ~~vitamin~~ vitamin C, in a suitable solvent followed by applying a suitable amount to the skin.

Please replace paragraph 3, bridging pages 10 and 11, line 2, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Dry pig skin (Alloask, Taiho Pharmaceutical) was immersed in water for 3 days. The pig skin was removed and subjected to oxidation treatment by immersing in an acrolein solution (Tokyo Chemical Industry) at 0, 1, 10 and 100 mM for 3 hours. Acrolein oxidizes by acting on protein resulting in the formation of an aldehyde-protein adduct. Following oxidation treatment, the pig skin was rinsed with water for 1 hour. After rinsing, the pig skin was initially dried (humidity: 50%, temperature: 25°C) in a Petri dish with the stratum

corneum side facing upward followed 15 minutes later by measuring the moisture content of the stratum corneum with the ~~Skineon-200~~ SKINCON-200 (IBS).

Please replace paragraph 2, starting at page 11, line 18, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Black pig skin was subjected to oxidation treatment for 1 hour with a 10 mM acrolein solution. After rinsing with water for 1 hour, the water was carefully wiped off, and the change in the water content of the stratum corneum over time was measured with the ~~Skineon-200~~ SKINCON -200.

Please replace paragraph 4, starting at page 11, line 30, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Black pig skin was treated for 1 hour with 20 mM hypochlorous acid. After rinsing with water for 1 hour, the water was carefully wiped off, and the change in the water content of the stratum corneum over time was measured with the ~~Skineon-200~~ SKINCON -200.

Please replace paragraph 1, starting at page 12, line 6, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Human forearm skin was subjected to occlusion treatment for 1 hour with PBS or 20 mM hypochlorous acid. After rinsing with water for 1 hour, the water was carefully wiped off, and the change in the water content of the stratum corneum over time was measured with the ~~Skineon-200~~ SKINCON -200.